

Special Angus Council

2 March 2023

Equality Impact Assessment & Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment – Overall Revenue & Capital Budget
2023/24

Equality Impact Assessment and Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment Form

Step 1

Name of Proposal Setting of the 2023/24 General Fund Revenue and Capital Budgets and Council Tax

It should be noted that this assessment covers reports 41/23 through to 62/23 of the Special Angus Council agenda items excepting instances where a report notes that an EIA is not required or where a specific EIA has been prepared in respect of a Change Programme / saving initiative. This includes the alternative budget proposals published in accordance with Standing Order 8(5) with respect to which it is noted the proposals are not considered to have any significantly different impact in relation to the 'protected characteristics'.

Step 2

Is this only a **screening** Equality Impact Assessment Yes/No

(A) If Yes, please choose from the following options **all** reasons why a full EIA/FSD is not required:

- | | |
|--|--------|
| (i) It does not impact on people | Yes/No |
| (ii) It is a percentage increase in fees which has no differential impact on protected characteristics | Yes/No |
| (iii) It is for information only | Yes/No |
| (iv) It is reflective e.g. of budget spend over a financial year | Yes/No |
| (v) It is technical | Yes/No |

If you have answered yes to any of points above, please go to **Step 16**, and sign off the Assessment.

(B) If you have answered No to the above, please indicate the following:

Is this a full Equality Impact Assessment	Yes
Is this a Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment	Yes

If you have answered Yes to either or both of the above, continue with Step 3.

If your proposal is a **strategy** please ensure you complete Step 13 which is the Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment.

Step 3

(i) Lead Directorate / Service: Finance

(ii) Are there any **relevant** statutory requirements affecting this proposal? Yes
If so, please describe.

It is a statutory requirement for the Council to set the Council Tax for the forthcoming financial year by 10 March. An inherent part of setting the Council Tax is the approval of related revenue and capital budgets.

(iii) What is the aim of the proposal? Please give full details.

The aim of the proposals at the Special Council meeting on 2 March 2023 is to:-

- Agree updated versions of the Council Plan, Finance & Change Plan and Workforce Plan;
- Set the General Fund Revenue Budget for 2023/24;
- Set the level of Band D Council Tax for 2023/24;
- Set the General Fund 2022/2027 Capital Plan incorporating the 2023/24 Provisional Capital Budget.

(iv) Is it a new proposal? Yes/No Please indicate OR

Is it a review of e.g. an existing budget saving, report, strategy, policy, service review, procedure or function? Yes/No Please indicate

Annual review of the Council Plan and related documents plus the Council's Revenue and Capital Budgets and Council Tax Charge.

Step 4: Which people does your proposal involve or have consequences for?

Please indicate all which apply:

Employees Yes/No

Job Applicants Yes/No

Service users Yes/No

Members of the public Yes/No

Step 5: List the evidence/data/research that has been used in this assessment (links to data sources, information etc which you may find useful are in the Guidance). This could include:

Internal data: Financial data held in the Council's corporate financial management system and other financial systems of the Council.

Internal consultation: All services have been involved in the preparation of their revenue and capital budgets following guidance issued by the Director of Finance. Elected members have been involved, through the Policy and Budget Strategy Group, in formulating proposed administration and non-administration budgets.

External data: Information from the Scottish Government, COSLA and other government bodies has been received and used to assist with the budget process.

External consultation: Partner organisations have been involved and consulted through the full process. This includes Angus Health and Social Care Partnership and ANGUSalive.

Other: Discussion with Trade Unions has taken place on the budget and key proposals within the budget. All proposals for budget savings through the Council's Change Programme and target led savings and changes to our charges have been subject to individual equalities impact assessments. Budget proposals have been discussed with Trade Unions through the Council's Central Consultative Committee and those relating to Education and Lifelong Learning will be considered by a Special Children & Learning Committee which includes teaching and religious representatives.

Step 6: Evidence Gaps.

Are there any gaps in the equality information you currently hold? Yes/No

If yes, please state what they are, and what measures you will take to obtain the evidence you need.

The savings outlined within the Change Programme will, in a number of instances, necessitate service reviews being undertaken. These reviews will be specific to the services and groups of employees potentially impacted and, as such, equality considerations are not known at this stage. This information will be gathered as each service review progresses and further Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken as and when required.

Step 7: Are there potential differential impacts on protected characteristic groups?

Please complete for each group, including details of the potential impact on those affected. Please remember to take into account any particular impact resulting from **Covid-19**.

Please state if there is a potentially positive, negative, neutral or unknown impact for each group. Please state the reason(s) why.

Note: there may negative impacts arising from the individual savings proposals by each Council service. Reference should be made to the specific Equality Impact Assessments for each saving in this regard as they are not repeated in this assessment.

Age

Impact

The increased investment in the budget (funded by the Scottish Government) around schools additional funding for free school meals and ongoing removal of curriculum charges and music tuition fees will benefit all children and their families. The budget will also increase the amount paid in school clothing grants but school meals charges for those able to pay will also increase. However, children living in poverty who have been impacted most by the pandemic and increased living costs should benefit the most. Additional funding to maintain

home to school transport will similarly assist those families in poverty with school aged children.

Additional Scottish Government funding towards the Angus Health and Social Care partnership and social work services is expected to have a positive impact across all age groups within the Angus area but will have most impact on older people and their carers. There will be increases in charges for clients and the equality impacts of those are addressed in the related report and EIA on the Agenda for this meeting.

The Council's continued investment in residential accommodation and fostering which is required due to the level of demand and cost associated with this provision will have a positive impact on those young people concerned.

Continued funding support by the Council for the Glen Clova Project will allow this project to continue its focus on addressing child poverty including during pre-birth and very early years and delivering early support across a range of groups and partnerships to meet wellbeing needs.

Disability

Impact

Additional Scottish Government funding for support of whole family wellbeing is expected to have a positive impact for people with disabilities. Scottish Government funding towards the Angus Health and Social Care partnership and social work services is also expected to have a positive impact on the availability of care services for disabled people.

Increased provision for Discretionary Housing Payments will assist citizens in receipt of Universal Credit or Housing Benefit who require assistance with their rent. Citizens with disabilities are more likely to be economically disadvantaged.

Funding to maintain support for local bus transport services will support those citizens with mobility issues.

Gender reassignment

Impact

None

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Impact

None

Pregnancy/Maternity

Impact

Unknown

Race - (includes Gypsy Travellers)

Impact

Unknown

Religion or Belief

Impact

None

Sex

Impact

The review of public transport which is included in the change programme as part of this budget setting aims to create a transport system more able to be used by women, who, are currently most often excluded because of lower instances of driving licence holding (especially amongst older women) or personal security concerns. Funding to maintain support for local bus transport services will ensure continuation of current provision for women.

Continued support for the Glen Clova Project as part of this budget process will allow this project to continue its focus on addressing child poverty in pre-birth and very early years and delivering early support across a range of groups and partnerships to meet wellbeing needs

Sexual orientation

Impact

None

Step 8: Consultation with any of the groups potentially affected

If you have consulted with any group potentially affected, please give details of how this was done and what the results were.

See response at Step 5.

If you have not consulted with any group potentially affected, how have you ensured that you can make an informed decision about mitigating action of any negative impact (Step 9)?

Step 9: What mitigating steps will be taken to remove or reduce potentially negative impacts?

The implications of individual change programme projects which may result in service reductions are, where necessary, subject of their own Equality Impact Assessment and thus mitigating actions. Where service reviews are undertaken to deliver savings, the deletion of vacant posts, redeployment, retraining and phased redundancy will always be the first steps to minimise any negative impact the employees in scope for such reviews.

Step 10: If a potentially negative impact has been identified, please state below the justification.

There will inevitably be negative impacts arising from elements of the Change Programme as the Council strives to balance its budget while meeting its statutory obligations. It is not possible to deliver the scale of savings required without negatively impacting on the scale and scope of Council services but the Council will strive to ensure that these negative impacts are minimised and each individual EIA will assess the potential negative implications of saving proposals.

Step 11: In what way does this proposal contribute to any or all of the public sector equality duty to: eliminate unlawful discrimination; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between people of different protected characteristics?

Some of the proposals that form part of the Council's budget for 2023/24 contribute to the achievement of statutory requirements to reduce the poverty / socio-economic attainment gap for children and young people. These include:

- A commitment to fund a programme of provision during school holidays which includes food and fun.
- The retention of free music tuition and no core curriculum charges through specific additional Scottish Government funding.
- The investment in additional capacity for our Children, Families and Justice Service will increase the support available for those children and young people who are most disadvantaged.
- Increases in school clothing grants.

Step 12: Is there any action which could be taken to advance equalities in relation to this proposal?

Opportunities have been taken to reduce inequalities where possible, as detailed in this assessment.

Step 13: FAIRER SCOTLAND DUTY

This step is only applicable to **strategies** which are key, high level decisions. If your proposal is **not** a strategy, please leave this Step blank, and go to Step 14.

Links to data sources, information etc which you may find useful are in the Guidance.

Step 13(A) What evidence do you have about any socio-economic disadvantage/inequalities of outcome in relation to this strategic issue?

Analysis informing the Council Plan indicates that child poverty and women's inequalities are issues for Angus Council to address. Health inequalities continue to present challenges for our older population, as well as those with disabilities albeit these are mainly addressed through the Angus Health & Social Care Partnership. We know that the communities in Arbroath experience challenges associated with deprivation although there are pockets of deprivation throughout Angus. This is particularly associated with inequality in these communities around income, employment and health.

Step 13(B) Please state if there are any gaps in socio-economic evidence for this strategy and how you will take measures to gather the evidence you need.

Ongoing engagement mainly through the Council's Communities Teams is being undertaken with groups and communities to understand the nature of the socioeconomic impact arising from the proposals and any mitigating actions that may be available.

Step 13(C) Are there any potential impacts this strategy may have specifically on the undernoted groupings? Please remember to take into account any particular impact resulting from Covid-19.

Please state if there is a potentially positive, negative, neutral or unknown impact for each grouping.

Low and/or No Wealth (e.g. those with enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future.

Impact

Continued support for free school meals, digital inclusion with access to IT equipment for school children. The maintenance of free music tuition and the no curriculum charges will have a positive impact on low and no wealth households in Angus. Increased support to maintain local bus services will assist job seekers in accessing employment opportunities.

Material Deprivation (i.e. those unable to access basic goods and services e.g. repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies).

Impact

Angus Council continues to provide support to ANGUSalive. This financial support will allow leisure facilities to continue to provide subsidised fitness and exercises classes and facilities to all residents of Angus.

Some of the aspects of the Council's budget for 2023/24 may have a negative impact on material deprivation for those households with limited digital connectivity because the Council continues to move to more digital service provision. However, the Council knows digital approaches don't work for all and will continue to provide services in non-digital ways for those citizens who require this.

The budget provides funding for Scottish Welfare Fund and Council Tax Reduction payments including grants to allow basic goods to be provided as well as for financial and / or support in kind by our Social Work Services.

Increased support to maintain local bus services will assist citizens accessing services.

Area Deprivation (i.e. where people live (e.g. rural areas), or where they work (e.g. accessibility of transport).

Impact

The Council continues to invest in IT development in rural areas through expansion of rural broadband. Increased support to maintain local bus services will assist citizens accessing services.

We know that the communities in Arbroath experience challenges associated with deprivation although there are pockets of deprivation throughout Angus. This is particularly associated with inequality in these communities around income, employment and health.

Socio-economic Background i.e. social class including parents' education, people's employment and income.

Impact

The aspect of the budget setting proposals which will have the most significant impact on people who already experience socioeconomic disadvantage will be the related elements of the Council's Change Programme. This programme continues to focus on efficiency and minimising impact on front line services. It does include some reduction in services or changes to how they are provided. It is likely that a small number of these proposals will have a negative impact on those families and people with a socio-economic background but most of the budgets these groups rely on are being protected and in some cases enhanced through additional investment. Where applicable these are addressed in the individual Equality Impact Assessment associated with the savings proposals. The Council is,

however, putting additional resources into the Welfare Rights service, albeit on a one—off basis for 2023/24.

Other – please indicate
Not applicable

Step 13(D) Please state below if there are measures which could be taken to reduce socio-economic disadvantage/inequalities of outcome.

The officers named below consider that due regard has been paid by Angus Council to the impact onto inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage, when setting the 2023/24 Budget and Council Tax. It is highlighted that positive mitigating action is being undertaken in a number of areas to assist those who are experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage. It is however important to stress the financial context the Council is operating in which is one of ongoing and severe financial constraint over many years now. The Council's ability to address socio-economic disadvantage is constrained to a significant extent by the funding it has available and the multitude of other statutory duties it is required to meet.

Step 14: What arrangements will be put in place to monitor and review the Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment?

Budgets are monitored throughout the financial year and reported to policy and resources committee.

Full equality impact/fairer Scotland duty assessments are carried out on an annual basis as part of the budget setting process and when specific budget proposals come forward during the year.

Step 15: Where will this Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment be published?

On the Council's Website alongside the EIAs for the individual budget savings.

Step 16: Sign off and Authorisation. Please state name, post, and date for each:

Prepared by: Steven Mill, Service Lead (Finance) 16/2/23

Reviewed by: Doreen Phillips, Snr Practitioner (Equalities) 16.02.23

Approved by: Ian Lorimer, Director of Finance 22/2/23
